

INTERVIEWER MANUAL

NAEB Research Committee
Report #1

by

Merritt C. Ludwig

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14 Gregory Hall
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FOREWORD

This manual was prepared by Merritt C. Ludwig, Assistant to the Director, WOI-TV-AM-FM, for the guidance of interviewers in coincidental telephone surveys.

Although written for the particular situation at WOI, the manual is generally designed as an aid to any station interested in doing inexpensive audience research, and the procedures are readily adaptable to any local situation.

This report is one in a series being prepared by the NAEB Research Committee as a service to NAEB members.

NAEB Hq.
Urbana, Illinois
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INTERVIEWER'S MANUAL

1. Purpose of the Survey

You will be interviewing on what is called a COINCIDENTAL TELEPHONE SURVEY. The information you and other interviewers collect will be used to obtain an estimate of so-called "Hooperatings" for certain programs broadcast during the survey period.

In general, here's how the coincidental survey system works. By a statistically accurate system, we select a sample of telephone homes located in many communities all in the broadcast radius of the station. The sample is a representative cross section of all telephone homes in this area. What we learn about homes which are in the sample can then be generalized to apply to all homes from the area sampled. Of course, we must take into account sampling errors which are present in all surveys of this kind when we draw our conclusions.

At the period specified in your instructions, you and the other staff interviewers will make telephone calls to the homes on your lists. You will make one call right after another. Altogether, the interviewing staff will complete several hundred calls during the survey period. After each call you will record the information obtained in the interview on the REPORT FORM provided. When we have received your report it will be combined with reports from other interviewers in a general report from which we can then estimate the audience size for certain programs.

Steps in Preparation for Interview Period

1. ASSIGNMENT - You will usually receive your interviewing assignment a few days before the survey. Prior to that you may also have received word that a survey will be conducted on a certain day. The ASSIGNMENT itself will consist of one or more REPORT FORM sheets with names and phone numbers you are to call and the time of calling. Hold the assignment sheet in a safe place until the survey period. By a I means DO NOT inform anyone of the survey time or of the names of persons on your list. If you do the information you collect later may be very seriously biased and of no value. (See below for further discussion of this point.)

2. TELEPHONE - You should use a private line telephone for your interviewing. If you do not have a private line at your home, perhaps you can use a phone at a store, office, or other place which is not in use. Or, you may go to the local telephone office, explain what you are doing, and ask to use a phone there. Most telephone company offices would prefer to provide a phone for your use than to have you do survey work on a party line. If you have a 2-party line it may be possible to use it provided you contact the other party, explain what you are going to do, and secure their permission and cooperation. Failure to make arrangements with your party line partner might cause very hard feelings as well as great inconvenience in your interviewing job.

3. FAMILY COOPERATION - When you are making calls you will need reasonable "peace and quiet". Distractions and interruptions from the family or guests will slow down your work and cause you to make errors. If possible, work in a room all by yourself where you won't be disturbed. Your family will cooperate when they understand what you are doing.

4. SIT DOWN AT A TABLE - Don't try to stand up throughout the interviewing period. The work is steady and concentrated. Use a table or desk on which to put your report form and sit in a comfortable chair.

5. PENCILS AND ERASER - Use a PENCIL to mark the report form. You will be making changes and corrections, so have a good eraser handy too. Have a couple of extra pencils too in case you break the lead.

6. ACCURATE TIME - Since you are to start and stop interviewing at a precise time, be sure you can see an accurate watch or clock. It's a good idea to check the time with the radio and reset your watch or clock if necessary. If you go by a watch, lay it out on your table where it can be seen clearly. Or have the clock in front of you.

7. "DRY THROAT" - Women are reputed to be able to talk without ceasing for hours on end. But don't count on it. It's a good idea to have a glass of water nearby.

Audience Survey Report Form

Here's an explanation of the Report Form. (See the section on Filling out the Report Form below.)

SURVEY DATE - This is the day on which your calls are to be made. In the "Instructions" paragraph the time to begin and end interviewing will be filled in.

CITY - Since you may be assigned calls in other cities than your own, the city will be specified for each name. Calls outside your exchange will involve toll charges. At the end of your interview period call the long distance operator and get an item by item list of toll charges. Send the list with your report form and you will be reimbursed.

RESIDENCE - This is the name of the telephone subscriber. If you find another party at this address, put his name down, correcting the listing error.

PHONE - This is the residential phone number you call. Correct the number if the operator tells you it has been changed.

NO ANSWER - Stands for "no answer" at the time you called the number.

LINE BUSY - Line was busy when you called.

DISC. SERV. - Stands for "discontinued service". It can also mean the line is out of order.

TV ON - Means the TV set was turned on at the time you called.

CH. NO. - Stands for "channel number" to which the TV set was tuned.

TV OFF - Means the TV set was turned off at the time you called.

REMARKS - This small space is for added information you should jot down. (See further instructions below.)

Conducting Interview and Recording Information

START at the time indicated and call the first name on your list. When you have completed that interview (or found that you cannot reach the party) go on to the next listing. Work down through every name in the list completing as many interviews as you can. Then, when you have called the last name on the list go back to the top of the list again. This time, pick up second calls to all listings for which you did not complete an interview on the first time through. Continue this process until you have reached every home on the list--OR until the end of the interview period.

This is the questionnaire you should use for the interview. USE EXACTLY THESE WORDS.

- (1) "Hello. Is this the John Doe residence?"
- (2) "If you have a responsible person at home, would you please take a few minutes to answer a few questions?"
- (3) "We are taking a television survey on your home."
- (4) "How long have you lived in your home?"
- (5) "What time do you usually go to bed?"
- (6) "Can you tell me the name of the newspaper you read?"
- (7) "Thank you very much. Goodbye."

Situations will vary with each interview. Here are some tips to follow when the variations come along. We'll take up each item in the above list:

(1) Make sure you are talking with a responsible adult. If a child answers, ask for his father or mother--either one is okay. If you get someone who can't hear, who can't speak English, or otherwise can't take part in the interview, try for someone else in the house. When you have a competent respondent on the line, make sure you are talking to the "John Doe" residence. If not, what residence is it? Is the phone number the one you have on your list? If either the name or number you get corresponds to the one on your list, you have the right party. Correct your listing if necessary. If NEITHER the name or number corresponds with your listing, you have a wrong number. Hang up and try again. Having established that you are talking to the "John Doe" residence, go on to item 2.

(2) We hope everyone will accept this brief introduction and cooperate without question in answering the other items. But some respondents will be curious. They'll want to know "who's calling?", "who's making this survey?", "what do you want?", etc. In order to prevent a biased response, we must not reveal the identity of WOI-TV as sponsor of the survey. When you are asked to identify yourself and the survey further, you may add such phrases as these to the explanations:

"My name is Mrs. _____. I am calling on a TV survey."

"One of the Iowa TV stations is taking a survey to find out how many people are watching TV this evening (morning/afternoon)."

"It's a central Iowa TV station."

You may run into a respondent who still wants you to name the station. If you cannot side-step the question, go ahead and mention WOI-TV. In all such cases make a note of this on the report form so we will know the response may be biased. Then go ahead with the interview.

(3) This item is simple. If the respondent says there is no TV set in his home, terminate the interview. You should mark under "remarks" on the report form "NO SET". Do not make a mistake and check "set off". On the average you can expect to find about one out of three homes which does NOT have a TV set. This ratio will vary from town to town and between town and country. If the respondent says there is a set in his home, you mark nothing until you ask whether the set was turned on when you called. Exception: Maybe there is a set in the home but it is out of order. If so, make a notation of this fact under "remarks" and then terminate the interview.

(4) This is another "yes" or "no" question. Was the set ON or OFF---that's what you want to know. It has to be one or the other. Sometimes the set will be reported ON "but no one is paying attention to the program." You still check the set as being ON---then note "no one watching" under "remarks". If set is OFF, terminate the interview.

(5) Some people won't be able to tell you the channel number without going to the set to look. Take time to let them check. Do not accept a response like "Cedar Rapids" because there are two stations in Cedar Rapids and we wouldn't know which one. If they give you call letters without hesitation or doubt, you may accept this response and write the call letters (e.g. WOI-TV, WMT-TV, KVTU, etc.) in the space designated for "channel number". We much prefer that you get the number of the channel as well as the call letters. Remember, we want the identity of the station they had tuned in exactly when you called---not the station they just switched from or the one they intend to tune in "in just a minute".

(6) This item is included to verify the information you get on Item 5. Try to get the name of the program, such as "Toast of the Town". If you can't get the exact name, get some other identification such as "Ed Sullivan's program" or "some program about crop rotation" or whatever. Don't accept a response such as "some play" because several stations may be broadcasting a drama at that time. It's a good idea for you to familiarize yourself with the program schedule of stations received in your area---programs which will be broadcast during the survey period. You can see the station schedules in your local newspaper or in the Des Moines Register. Knowing something about the schedules will help you establish program identity faster.

(7) This item terminates the interview. Go through the items carefully but quickly. Get the information you're after and "run". Some respondents will want to give you their views on TV programs; they might even ask your opinions on them. Don't allow the interview to become a conversation. Quickly but courteously end the "conversation" and go on with the interviews.

An Important Caution:

Once in awhile you will find the name of a relative or good friend on the list you are to call. This will be especially true in smaller communities. In such a case the respondent will very likely recognize your voice and want to get into a nice little chat about what you're doing and why. Such situations can't be avoided. Naturally, you have to treat an acquaintance differently from other respondents. No use trying to disguise your voice. But, you can let the respondent know that this is a business, not social, call. When he or she understands this, proceed with the interview. Later you can call your friend back and explain in more detail. Remember, however, that our whole survey activity can be badly hurt if it is publicized in your town. So try to avoid talking about it with anyone.

Some Hints on Recording Information on Report Form

1. NO ANSWER - You should wait for the phone to ring 6 times. If there is no answer by then, hang up and go on to the next call. Make a little check mark in the "NO ANSWER" box. After you have finished the list of calls one time, you will probably have time to go back and try the NO ANSWER numbers again. If you again get no answer, make another check mark in the box and go on to the next call.

2. LINE BUSY - If you get a busy signal, Hang up and go on to the next call. Do not wait for the line to clear and do not call this number back until you have gone on down the list of names. On your next time through the list try the BUSY lines again. Make check marks accordingly in the LINE BUSY box same as for no answer calls. Don't erase these check marks. We want to know how many times you had to call before you got an answer.

3. DISC. SERV. - If the phone's out of order or disconnected check this box and go on to the next call. No use trying this number again.

What to Do About Refusals

On surveys of this kind we normally expect to have about 2% of the people you call refuse to cooperate. Either they're unable to understand what you want or they're "suspicious" of your motives. Some people have been tricked by so-called surveys which turn out to be disguises for magazine salesmen and they never get over it. When you contact an uncooperative respondent, take a little time to assure them of your good intentions. You aren't selling anything---you aren't going to use their names for any purpose---you aren't the F.B.I. If you can get them to listen long enough to what you want from them, they will usually see that you're harmless and they can lose nothing by going along.

All your tact may not be enough. The respondent might still be stubborn. If so, terminate the call courteously and make a note on the report form concerning the refusal.

Refusals are extremely rare. Don't worry about them.

"Honesty is the Best Policy"

Obviously, we will be happy if the survey shows that "everyone was viewing our station and no one was viewing other stations. But we know this will not be true. As a matter of fact, on a given survey we might find practically no one was viewing our station. In either case we want to know the truth about the audience.

Of course, you and the other interviewers have no axe to grind one way or the other---except that you are being paid by us to do the work. We hope you like us, but not so much that you allow your work to be biased. It would be easy in a doubtful situation to give the benefit of the doubt to us instead of some other station, and some interviewers would tend to follow this policy.

We'd rather you wouldn't do this. Neither do we want you to give the benefit of doubt to some other station. Conduct the interviews in such a way that there is no doubt. Then you won't have to make a biased decision either way. If you get mixed up, make a mistake, forget what to write down, or have any other reason to be in doubt---report the fact quite frankly. You won't be penalized for making mistakes if you are smart enough to note them and make corrections where possible. We make mistakes and know you will make some too. (But wouldn't it be fine if we could avoid them?) Careful reading of this manual plus a little interviewing experience will

iron out any problems.

Final Words

Try to finish it or complete it as we can make it. Some "situations" are found to be such that you will want further instructions. Wait until after the survey is over and write a letter explaining your problem and I'll try to help. And if you think our instructions are wrong---if the methods we have advised are not working properly---let us know that too. Maybe you can make some very helpful suggestions which will benefit every interviewer and thereby improve the surveys.

After the interviewer school our only contact with you will be by mail or telephone. You will get survey assignments by mail. We will try to send them to you about one week in advance. If a survey comes on short notice it may be necessary to phone or wire you.

If you get an assignment which you cannot carry out, LET US KNOW IMMEDIATELY BY TELEPHONE OR TELEGRAM "COLLECT". Call our office. The staff will be instructed to accept the collect charges. If we don't hear from you we will assume you will carry out the assignment.

By no means should you pass the job on to someone else. If you know of someone who can handle it properly (with your instructions, we'd appreciate the suggestion, however. But in all cases we will make the re-assignment.

Yes -- YOUR PAY!

We will pay you at the rate of \$1.50 for survey work. On any one assignment you will be paid a minimum of \$3.00 even though you work less than 2 hours.

Intelligence Survey Report Form

Security date

Name of Interviewer _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Make calls in order listed below. Begin calling at exactly _____ A.M./P.M.

Even though you have not called entire list, STOP calling at _____ A.M./P.M. Use IJCIL to check responses. Have eraser handy. At end of survey period check over your work to correct errors or clarify responses. Use back of sheet to report anything unusual, any problem, or lack of interviewee cooperation. Also report your total working time for which you are to be paid. You will be paid for a minimum of 2 hours even though you work less time. Then, mail this report to me in the envelope provided IMMEDIATELY. Thank you.

[illegible]

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